NOT LOST.

All is not lost when our ships go down
  That we've freighted with hope and launched with care,
And watched with pride as they sailed away
  When the sea was smooth and the wind was fair,
And looked for long when they came not again,
But were wrecked far out on the billowy main.

All is not lost; we may send out more
  That will weather the gales till the storms be past,
And with colors flying and sails unfurled
  Will gallantly steer into port at last;
And their coming at length will surely repay
The anxious watching and weary delay.

All is not lost when our best laid schemes
  Suddenly crumble and turn to decay;
When we build our plans on the shifting sands
  And the tides come in and wash them away.
If our plans are unwise and we see them collapse,
We will build with more prudence next time, perhaps.

All is not lost when we bear out our dead,
  Under the sod in their coffins lie,
Then sadly return to our desolate homes
  To weep and to mourn as the days go by—
And we miss the sound of their coming feet
And listen no more for their voices sweet.

All is not lost, for to us they yet live;
  We know that earth's farewells, though bitter, are brief;
In God's good time we shall clasp them again
  In a land unshadowed by care and grief;
For earthward they look, and stand and wait
To welcome us in through the heavenly gate.

Say not then in despair that all is lost
  When the fairest hopes of life fade away;
Think not the bright visions that dawn on us here
  Are but mocking mirages to lure us astray.
There are songs in the night, and a golden ray
To light up the gloom of the darkest day
—[Mrs. M. S. Offutt.

Odious Custom of Gift-Making.

[Louisville Courier-Journal.]

In modern times every conceivable occasion is grasped by some gift-making Holidays, birthdays, wedding anniversaries, promotions, election to office, departures, and most everything else must be celebrated this way, and it is this which has made the custom an odious one.

A gentleman was talking on the subject a few days ago.

"Do you know," said he, "that many a man in this city has been compelled at times to rob his family of some needed comfort in order to keep up with his fellow-employes in gift-making? Well, it is a fact, and to say the least of it, a shemeful one. A dozen men are employed in a store, and some event in the life of their employer makes recognition and remembrance on their part essential—not justly so, but still they must not appear picayunish, and a present is decided upon, and each fellow assessed enough to make in the aggregate the sum required to purchase it. Some of these men have families which they find it a hard matter, on small salaries, to provide for. These $2 or $3 or $5 taken from their purses are needed at home, doubtless, but still they have to give it up to pamper to a foolish, aye, criminal custom, or be called niggardly and maybe, if their 'stinginess' becomes known to their employer, incur his displeasure and lose their places."

"Do you think any man would be mean enough to discharge an employe because he refused to rob his children for such a purpose?"

"Do I? Well, I should think so. I know of instances where men have been given to understand that they were expected to contribute, and, failing, would have to look for work elsewhere. It is this system of robbery which has made gift-making so pernicious. The worst feature is that it is growing steadily, until now some men can scarce turn around without expecting some one to give them something."

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SALESWOMAN.

Beauty Not an Unmixed Advantage—Tests of Temper and Tact.

"Do you have many applications for work from saleswomen?" asked a reporter of the manager of a large up-town store.

"We can get all we need at short notice," he replied. "Most of the ladies like to hail from a large concern like ours. But it is not easy to find many who are fully up to our standard."

"What is the standard?"

"The question is not easy to answer. We expect a lady to be quiet, yet confident; alert and wide awake, yet polite and agreeable; easy and frank, yet possessing a touch of firmness, and not so outspoken as to injure trade. In fact, a good saleslady is rather a complex article under a simple exterior. Patience and coolness are among the best points they can possess. I sometimes feel obliged in a doubtful case, to test an applicant upon this point of equanimity by trying the effect of some little aggravating remark. If she remains cool and pleasant, her chances are good; if she colors and bites her lips, I am forced to regard her as inexperienced, and put her in some simple department—hosiery, for example. One of the instincts that an inexperienced girl has to contend with is the tendency to stiffen up if a customer becomes a little disagreeable. But I could pick out a good saleslady much more easily than I can describe her."

"Is beauty a desirable point?"

"On the whole I think its importance is overrated. I should prefer, from a business point of view, what is called an attractive girl, who is graceful and has a fair figure. Many of our best saleslades are not remarkable for physical charms, though all are agreeable in manner. Some houses make a point of beauty. It is thought to be useful at counters frequented by gentlemen; but we have often been obliged to displace saleslades for keeping gentlemen in conversation. The art is to say just enough to effect the sales and dispose of the customer when business commences to degenerate into chatter.

"Beauties are hard to take care of; we often have to 'call' them, that is, send them on a message to a distant part of the establishment as a hint. I think it quite possible that large sales at high profits are made in the departments of men's furnishing goods by having good-looking girls behind the showcases. Nevertheless, I do not think that, as a whole, we consider the value of a pretty girl, in the wages market, to be greater than that of a plainer girl who is as attractive in other respects. We do not pay more for beauty unless it is combined with other high qualities.

"In the cloak and other trying on departments personal charms are of great value, of course, and command high wages; but even here it is more a matter of figure and graceful movement than of face. It is perhaps advantageous to have handsome, refined-looking girls in the lace and embroidery departments. In the silk and trimming departments we require good taste, a faculty for nice draping and a quick eye for colors, united with a genius for matching fabrics. We pay well in these departments, and in selecting ladies for them good looks have only a secondary place. Some of the ladies, as you will notice, are quite plain, but all are nice looking.

"Women perfectly suitable for the trimmed-hat department are certainly born, not made. I assure you that few of the fine arts are more difficult than that of selling ladies' hats. The hats, with their velvets, silks, laces, flowers, feathers, and passementeries, are very complex articles. To be able to choose the particular one from stock that is most suitable and becoming to a customer's features, complexion, age, and style requires natural gifts of a high order. Ladies are always studying dress more or less, but the number who can trim a hat tastefully, and who know what is most becoming to them, is small. They feel this, and although they are often very opinionated in other matters of dress, they are quite apt to depend much upon any saleslady in this department whom they believe to be really competent. Hence the need of the best talent here, and, as the best talent is always in demand, the prices for it are high."

"Why do they object to being called sales-women?"

"I don't know."

Marriage.

Men and women, says Theodore Parker, and especially young people, do not know that it takes years to marry completely two hearts, even of the most loving and well sorted. But nature allows no sudden change. We slope very gradually from the cradel to the summit of life. Marriage is gradual, a fraction of us at a time.

A happy wedlock is a long falling in love. I know young persons think love belongs only to brown hair and plump, round crimson cheeks. So it does for its beginning, just as Mount Washington begins at Boston Bay. But the golden marriage is a part of love which the bridal day knows nothing of.

Youth is the tassel and silken flower of love, age is the full corn, ripe and solid in the ear. Beautiful is the morning of love with its prophetic crimson, violet, purple and gold, with its hopes of days that are to come. Beautiful also is the evening of love, with its glad remembrances, and its rainbow side turned toward heaven as well as earth.

Young people marry their opposites in temper and general character, and such a marriage is generally a good one. They do it instinctively. The young man does not say, "My black eyes require to be wed to blue, and my overvehemence requires to be a little modified with somewhat of lullness and reserve." When those opposites come together to be wed, they do not know it, but each thinks the other just like himself.

Old people never marry their opposites, they marry their similars and from calculation. Each of these two arrangements is very proper. In their long journey these opposites will fall out of the way a great many times, and both will charm the other back again, and by and by they will agree as to the place they will go to, and the road they will go by and become reconciled. The man will be nobler and larger for being associated with so much humanity unlike himself, and she will be a nobler woman for having manhood beside her, that seeks to correct her deficiencies and supply her with what she lacks, if the diversity is not too great, and there be real pity and love in their hearts to begin with.

The old bridegroom, having a much shorter journey to make, must associate himself with one like himself. A perfect and complete marriage is, perhaps, as perfect personal beauty. Men and women are married fractionally—now a small fraction, and then a large fraction.

Very few are married totally, and they only, I think, after some forty or fifty years of gradual approach and excitement. Such a large and sweet fruit is a complete marriage that it needs a winter to mellow and season. But a real happy marriage of love and judgment between a man and woman is one of the things so very handsome that if the sun were, as the Greek poets fabled, a God, he might stop the world in order to feast his eyes with such a spectacle.

The Sun and Vegetable Life.

From an acorn weighing only a few grains a tree will grow, for a hundred years or more, not only throwing off many pounds of leaves every year, but itself weighing several tons. If an orange twig is put in a large box of earth, and that earth weighed, when the twig becomes a tree, bearing luscious fruit, there will be very nearly the same quantity of earth.

From careful experiments made by different scientific men, it is an ascertained fact that a very large part of the growth of a tree is derived from the sun, from the air, and from the water, and a very little from the earth; and notably all vegetation becomes sickly unless it is freely exposed to the sunshine. Wood and coal are but condensed sunshine, which contains three important elements, all equally essential to both vegetable and animal life—magnesia is important to any of the tissues.

Thus it is that the more persons are out of doors the more healthy they are, and the longer they live. Every human being ought to have an hour or two of sunshine at noon in the winter, and in the early forenoon in summer.

A QUEST FOR A HEART.

I looked forth from my inmost self,
  And searched the world throughout;
"My life," I cried, "for one true heart,
  To swear by without doubt!"

I looked again, and looked in vain,
  No heart appealed to mine;
"Seek not outside," a voice replied,
  "For hearts to answer thine."

I looked within, and next mine own,
  So close that both seemed one,
I found the heart—and there it lies;
  'Tis yours—My search was done.

A Sad Life.

Foolish girls who, dazzled by the glare of the footlights, are hankering to appear on the stage, should read and digest these confessions of Miss Maggie Mitchell, a successful artist, written for the North American Review:

It would be bold for me to pretend to descry the chances of success for the actress of the future. It is a lottery this profession of ours, in which even the prizes are, after all not very considerable.

My own days, spent most of them far from my children and the comforts and delights of my home, are full of exhausting labor.

Rehearsals and other business occupy me from early morning to the hour of performance, with brief intervals for rest and food and a little sleep.

In the best hotels my time is so invaded that I can scarcely live comfortably, much less luxuriously. At the worst, existence becomes a torment and a burden.

I am the eager yet weary slave of my profession, and the best it can do for me—who am fortunate enough to be included among its successful members—is to barely palliate the suffering of a forty weeks' exile from my own house and my family.

For those of our calling who have to make this weary round, year after year, with disappointed ambitions and defeated hopes as their inseparable company, I can feel from the bottom of my heart.

Each season makes the life harder and drearier; each year robs it of one more prospect, one more chance, one more opportunity to try and catch the fleeting bubble in another field.

Why Men Don't Wear Finer Clothes.

[New York Post.]

The reformers who have been endeavoring for a number of years to induce men to clothe themselves in more picturesque garments have made little headway, evidently because they have overlooked the economic relation between male and female costume.

All economists know that there is only a given amount of capital in the world at any given time which can be used by the two sexes at what they call the clothes fund; and that the more of this there is used by one sex the less there is left for the other. In early times, when men were stronger than women, and made use of their strength in their own interest, they took the greater part of this fund and spent it upon themselves, which accounts for the fact of the splendor of male attire among so many primitive races, and for the seclusion in which the women were kept—much lavish expenditure in "shopping" being thus prevented.

In our day, on the contrary, the progress made by women in establishing an independent position for themselves is seen in their getting the lion's share of the clothes fund, just as it is elsewhere.

For the last two centuries every step in the advance of women in getting their rights has been marked by a corresponding decline in the dress of men, until knee breeches, slashed doublets, jewelry, wigs and lace have all been discarded, while that share of the fund formerly devoted to these goes into the dress of women. What reformers ought to advocate is, first of all, the resubjection of woman, her relegation to her old position. This, however, involves a general uprising by men, for which they show no evidence of being ripe.

TELLING SUPERSCRIPTIONS.

What the Mail Agent Learns of Letters That Go Through His Hands.

[Grand Rapids Democrat].

"If you want a position to study human nature without seeing the person," said George W. Stanton, Jr., a mail agent, "you can find it in the railway postal service. The letters that a man writes are nearly always characteristic of his description, and there are as many kinds of letters as there are dispositions. The careful, painstaking student writes a superscription—for of course that is all I have to deal with in letters—painfully plain with all the requisite shading of the Spencerian style. The clerk in a hurry to get off the mail combines a good business hand with so much haste that it is impossible to distinguish his Iowa from Ind. Although the letters of persons not used to writing them are addressed in a cramped, uneven hand, yet they are generally plain to read, and if their spelling is not too bad their destination is easily surmised. The square tinted and perfumed envelopes which swell up Monday's mail are in a delicate little hand but always easy to read.

"Every few mails we get from New York contain what is known as the "Dutch brig." It's a batch of foreign letters generally directed to the settlers up in the north woods. That is a picnic for us poor fellows. Some of the names are regular jaw-breakers, but of course stations are all that bother me, but whatever else is on the letter, 'Stat Michigan, Nord Amerika,' is invariably somewhere on the envelope. There are generally five or six lines of superscription.

"The letters which come from the East are evenly and plainly written, as if the sender had leisure; but the Western letters, while the writing is just as good as that upon the Eastern letters, looks as if the superscription had been written while ready to take a train. Western people show a hurry in everything about their letters. Bothersome abbreviations are common, as if there was no time to write out the full name. In sorting mail in the car haste is imperative, and very often a letter is so badly addressed that all I can do is to lay it aside until I've got time to lie down and study, and try to make something out of nothing."

"How about the amount of mail on different days. It varies considerably, don't it?" asked the reporter.

"Oh yes, Monday is the heaviest letter day and Wednesday generally the lightest. Friday and Saturday give the heaviest commercial mails. The Monday morning mail is social correspondence to a great extent and it is wonderful how it will vary with the weather. A bright, pleasant Sunday will make a comparatively light mail on Monday morning, as people don't stay at home and don't get time to write letters. But let the Sunday be a rainy, disagreeable day and it seems as if the whole populace spent the day writing to friends.

"People write more letters in the fall and winter than they do in the summer—the spring is the lightest season. Many more papers are circulated in winter than in summer, as people have more time to read. Correspondents are tired then, you know.

"There is lots of fun too in the business if it is hard work. It's rather amusing to watch the regularity which correspondents often show. I don't notice it in the mails from larger places, but up the road where only a few letters come on the train I catch on to lots of rackets. There is a fellow up north at a siding who always brings his mail and puts it on the train. Why I can set my watch by that fellow. It's only a short time since he commenced to send with such regularity and when he hands the letter in to me he gives a wink and a small smile. The letter goes to a girl on the Central and the regularity with which the replies come back is a fair omen. I should think, although not much of a judge myself, that something was going to happen before long."

A Proper Mate.

[Chicago Interior.]

When we come to marriage as an element of happiness, we arrive at what some consider as the proper object of life's journey.

In looking at the window of a jeweller, the reader may have seen a figure of Cupid with a bunch of wedding rings, and as he looked, he may have speculated on the future lot of those who were to wear them. Were the loving bonds they typified to be dissolved prematurely by death, broken in a court of law, or were they to issue in a golden wedding, after fifty years of a happy life? The answer is given to such an enquiry in the following story.

A lady on the eve of her wedding day, had a curious dream. She saw on a table, some bunches of wedding rings. Various persons made their selections from these bunches. One bunch represented rings taken by those who married from thoughtlessness, another, rings selected by those who married from pride; a third, rings chosen by those who married for money; a fourth, rings picked out by those who married from principle and true affection. Then the figure of Time appeared on the scene: as he touched one bunch of rings, they were found only to be copper. Another bunch changed into curling vipers, and it was only the rings which had been selected from esteem and affection, that stood the test, and proved to be pure gold.

At a wedding at which we were present, when the health of the bride and bridegroom was proposed, and they were about to start on the hymeneal tour, the young couple were compared by a speaker to a shallop with gay streamers, impatient to be liberated from its moorings and sail onwards on the mystical voyage of life. "Examine carefully," so spoke in effect our friend, "examine carefully the company you are going to take with you in your boat. Here comes Beauty; a place for her smiling face by all means. A place for Love? Yes, and one of the best. Another and a good one for Health. Make room, too, for Thrift and Prudence. Let Culture, also, that lady with the stately step, be admitted if she wish. Above all, keep a good place for Sweet Temper, and the best in the boat for Piety and Principle. That haughty dame, Self will, with the last word in her mouth, we cannot admit, on any consideration. We do not object to Dame Money. Her parcel is not a large one, and it can be added to on the voyage. Nor will we exclude these two good-natured animals 'Bear and Forbear.' With these companions in the boat, and God's blessing and his sacred word to direct you, we do not doubt that your voyage will be a pleasant one." We cordially endorse our friend's words, and recommend them as our advice "to those about to marry," instead of the well-known monosyllabic counsel "Don't."

The Power of Daniel Webster's Gaze.

[Letter in New York Post.]

"One Sunday a student from Andover occupied the pulpit, my father not intending to take any part in the exercises.

The young minister got along very well with the opening prayer and the Scripture lesson, but when he had read only a verse or two of the hymn he became confused, stammered, and at last his voice failed him entirely. As he seemed to be taken suddenly ill my father finished the service, preaching an extemporaneous discourse.

On the way home in the carriage the young man, who by that time had quite revived, being pressed for an explanation concerning his conduct, finally confessed: 'Well, sir, it was merely an unaccountable nervousness. Just as I was reading the second stanza of the hymn a gentleman came into the church and sat down in a broad-aisle pew directly before me, fixing such great staring black eyes upon me that I was frightened out of my wits!' Until he was then told he did not know that Daniel Webster was a member of the congregation or an inhabitant of the town."

THE DREAM CHILD.

Oft in the summer twilight hours
  I sit and in my arms I hold
A little child, whose eyes are blue;
  Whose hair is sunny gold.
He looks up lovingly at me,
  I look down lovingly on him,
And with sweet tears of happiness,
  I feel my sight grow dim.

The child is like my life's best gift,
  He has the selfsame noble face;
In every gesture, every smile,
  A likeness, too, I trace,
And this would make him dearer still,
  If aught so dear could dearer be,
I think as on his fragraut mouth
  I kiss him tenderly.

But, ah! as fades the light, so fades
  The eyes, the smile, the shining hair,
I have but dreamed; the night brings truth—
  I clasp the empty air;
And mem'ry coming back repeats;
  "Alas! to three no little one
Says 'mother.'" And I strive to say:
  "Dear Lord, Thy will be done!"
—[Margaret Eytinge.

OLD MRS. BRAY'S STORY.

When my son Gregory married Miss Morrison, I gave him a piece of my mind and told him I didn't care if I never saw him again. Why? Oh, well, I didn't like her; she wasn't the sort of girl I'd have chosen. I'd never seen her, but I knew she wasn't,—a flighty young thing, just out of boarding-school; couldn't make a shirt or a loaf of bread; and there was Miss Fish, a very plain girl, I must allow, but so good—a splendid housekeeper, and all that. I always liked Almira Fish; and Gregory to go marry Fanny Morrison! Well, as I said, I told him what I thought of him and of her, and the boy showed his temper, and for six months I never saw him.

I bore it as long as I could, but a mother must be a fool about her only boy; so one day, as he wouldn't come to me, I went to him, as the rascal knew I would. I went to his office, and I walked up to his desk, and I was going to scold him, but something came over me that made me choke to keep the tears back, and before I knew it we had kissed and made friends.

"And now you'll go and see Fanny," said he, "and I'll find you there when I come home at night;" and after a little coaxing I said I would go; and more than that, I went.

The house was a cunning little place, a mile or two out of town; and I must say it was very neat outside. I rang the bell; it shone as it ought to, and before it stopped tinkling some one opened the door. It was a pretty young woman in a blue chintz wrapper, and when I asked her if Mrs. Gregory Bray was at home she answered,—

"Yes; that is my name. I've been expecting you an age, but better late than never."

"How did you know I was coming?" I asked, puzzled to guess how she knew me, for we had never met before.

"Oh, I didn't know," said she. "Indeed, I made up my mind you wouldn't; but it's a long way out here, I know. Come right up stairs. Miss Jones was here yesterday to cut and baste, but we'll find it as much as we can do to do the trimming between us."

"Cool," I thought. Then I said, "I suppose you are having a dress made?"

"A suit," said she; "skirt, overskirt, basque, and dolman. I do hope you make nice buttonholes."

"I should hope I did," said I. "I should be ashamed of myself if I couldn't."

"So many can't," said she; "but I told Miss Jones to send me an experienced hand, and she said that there was no better than Mrs. Switzer."

Now I began to understand. My daughter-in-law took me for a seamstress she expected, and if ever a woman had a chance, I had one now. Not a word did I say. Only I wondered whether seamstresses generally came to work in black grosgrain silk and a cashmere shawl; and I sat down in the rocking-chair she gave me and went to work with a will. I can sew with any one, and as for buttonholes—but this is not my story.

She was a pretty girl, that daughter-in-law of mine, and very chatty and sociable. I talked of this and I talked of that, but not a word did she say of her mother-in-law. I spoke of people I had known who had had quarrels with relations, but she did not tell me that her husband's mother had quarreled with him.

At last I spoke right out about mothers-in-law, and said I,—

"As a general thing, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law don't agree."

Said she, "That's a very wrong state of things."

"Well," said I, "I suppose it is, but how do you account for it?"

"I suppose young people are selfish when they are first in love," said she, "and forget old people's feelings."

It was an answer I didn't expect.

"It is plain you are friendly with your mother-in-law," said I.

"I'm sure I should be if I'd ever seen her," said she.

"Oh! then I've been misinformed," said I. "I was told—I forget by whom—that Mr. Gregory Bray was the son of the Mrs. Bray who lives on——Street.

"That is perfectly true," said she, "but nevertheless we've never met."

"How singular!" said I. "I suppose it is old Mrs. Bray's fault. I've heard she was a very queer old lady."

"You haven't heard the truth, then," said my daughter-in-law. "My husband's mother is a very fine woman in every respect. But when my husband told her suddenly that he was going to marry a girl she never saw, she was naturally startled, and she said some things about me, knowing I was fresh from boarding-school, and no housekeeper—that offended Gregory, and so there has been an estrangement. I think my dear husband a little to blame, and I've urged him a dozen times to go and see her. He's very found of her, and thinks no one like her in many things; but his temper is up, and it will take time to cool it. Meanwhile, I feel quite sure if she knew me, she'd like me better. Perhaps that is a piece of vanity, but I should try to make her, you know, and I won't fall into absurd superstitions that a woman must hate her mother-in-law. I mean to love mine some day. I can't remember my own mother, and Gregory's certainly would seem to come next to her. Now you have the story, Mrs. Switzer."

"I'm sure it does you credit," said I; "and the old lady ought to be ashamed of herself."

I wanted to get up and kiss my daughter-in-law there and then, but that would have spoiled my fun. So after that I sewed hard and did not say much, and together we finished the pretty silk dress, and had it just finished, when the sound of a key in the door caught both our ears.

"That is my husband," said my daughter-in-law; and I knew it was Gregory. Up-stairs he came, two steps at a time, opened the door and looked at us with a bright smile on his face.

"This is as it should be," said he. "Fanny, I shall kiss mother first, this time."

And he put his arms around us both. But Fanny gave a little scream.

"Oh! Gregory," she cried, "what are you about? This is Mrs. Switzer, who is making my dress. At least, I—I have thought so all day." For, you see, I had burst out laughing, and had kissed Gregory back and then kissed her. "My dear," said I, "I've played a little trick on you, or rather, let you play one on yourself, but you've turned out as good as gold. I couldn't get you to say a word against the old lady. I am Gregory's mother, my dear, and yours, too, if you'll call me so."

"Indeed I will," said the dear girl; "but I've kept you sewing hard all day. You see I expected a Mrs. Switzer, and I"——

"We've been all the more sociable for that, my dear," I said, "and I am glad it happened. I've been very foolish all this while, and Gregory has chosen a better wife for himself than I could have done."

And so I think to this day, for I believe there never was a better woman born than Gregory's wife, Fanny.

THE COMET.

[Bill Nye, in Detroit Free Press.]

The comet is a kind of astronomical parody on the planet. Comets look some like planets but they are thinner and do not hurt so hard when they hit anybody as a planet does. The comet was so called because it had hair on it, I believe, but late years the bald-headed comet is giving just as good satisfaction everywhere.

The characteristic features of the comet are: A nucleus, a nebulous light or coma, and usually a luminous train or tail worn high. Sometimes several tails are observed on one comet, but this occurs only in flush times.

When I was young I used to think I would like to be a comet in the sky, up above the world so high, with nothing to do but loaf around and play with the little new laid planets and have a good time, but now I can see where I was wrong. Comets also have their troubles, their perihelions, their hyperbolas and their parabolas. A little over 300 years ago Tycho Brahe discovered that comets were extraneous to our atmosphere, and since then times have improved. I can see that trade is steadier and potatoes run less to tops than they did before.

Soon after that they discovered that comets all had more or less periodicity. Nobody knows how they got it. All the astronomers had been watching them day and night and didn't know when they were exposed, but there was no time to talk and argue over the question. There were two or three hundred comets all down with it at once. It was an exciting time.

Comets sometimes live to a great age. This shows that the night air is not so injurious to the health as many people would have us believe. The great comet of 1680 is supposed to have been the one that was noticed about the time of Cæsar's death, 44 B. C., and still when it appeared in Newton's time, seventeen hundred years after its first grand farewell tour, Ike said that it was very well preserved indeed and seemed to have retained all its faculties in good shape.

Astronomers say that the tails of all comets are turned from the sun. I do not know why they do this, whether it is etiquette among them or just a mere habit. A late writer on astronomy said that the substance of the nebulosity and the tail is of almost inconceivable tenuity.

He said this and then death came to his relief. Another writer says of the comet and its tail that "the curvature of the latter and the acceleration of the periodic time in the case of Encke's comet indicate their being affected by a resisting medium which has never been observed to have the slightest influence on the planetary periods. I do not fully agree with the eminent authority, though he may be right. Much fear has been the result of the comet's appearance ever since the world began, and it is as good a thing to worry about as any thing I know of. If we could get close to a comet without frightening it away, we would find that we could walk through it any where as we could through the glare of a torchlight procession. We should so live that we will not be ashamed to look a comet in the eye, however. Let us pay up our newspaper subscription and lead such lives that when the comet striketh we will be ready.

Some worry a good deal about the chances for a big comet to plow into the sun some dark rainy night, and thus bust up the whole universe, I wish that was all I had to worry about. If any responsible man will agree to pay my taxes and funeral expenses, I will agree to do his worrying about the comet's crashing into the bosom of the sun and knocking its daylights out.